



- **Nurse Practitioners** – The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) would allow a nurse practitioner to serve as the attending physician for a patient who elects the hospice benefit. The nurse practitioner acting as the attending physician would not be permitted to certify the terminal diagnosis.
- **Rural Hospice Demonstration Project** – The MMA would require CMS to conduct a demonstration project to test delivery of hospice care in rural areas under which Medicare beneficiaries without a caregiver at home may receive care in a facility of 20 or fewer beds. The 20-bed (or fewer) facility will not be required to offer hospice services in the community or comply with the 20 percent limit on inpatient days.
- **Hospice Consultation Services** – The MMA creates coverage for hospice consultation services (one time only) for a terminally ill individual who has not yet elected the hospice benefit. Such consultation may include evaluations of the patient's need for pain and symptom management, and care options. The amount paid to the hospice will be equal to the payment under the physician fee schedule for an evaluation and management visit for problems of moderate severity and requiring medical decision making of low complexity.
- **Use of Arrangements to Provide Core Hospice Services** – The MMA authorizes use of arrangements with other hospice programs to provide core hospice services in certain exigent or extraordinary circumstances. It also allows hospices to contract for highly specialized services.